

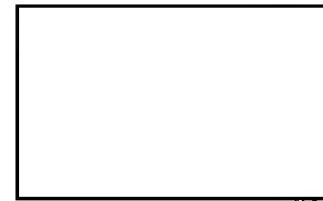
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Cease-Fire Developments

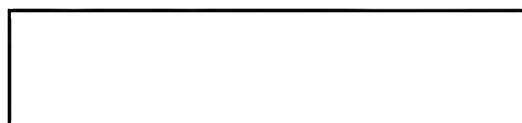
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Cease-Fire Developments

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The Military situation

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NORTH VIETNAMHanoi to Convene Fourth Party Congress?

The North Vietnamese may be planning to convene a party congress in the near future.

[redacted] got the impression that it would take place sometime between next December and June, 1974.

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Hanoi held its last party congress--the Third--in 1960, and at that time it laid down the broad guidelines for the military struggle in South Vietnam. After the signing of the Paris Accords last January, the North Vietnamese were expected to convene a congress to promulgate new party guidelines more in line with the current situation in Vietnam.

One of the highest priorities of the party congress will almost certainly be reconstruction and economic development in North Vietnam. Another pressing issue is how to support the "revolution" in the South by peaceful means. The congress will probably also address the problem of how to bring younger, more technically qualified cadre into the party hierarchy, and it presumably will take note of the changes in the hierarchy that have occurred in the last 13 years.

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SOUTH VIETNAMMore on Deployment of Viet Cong Truce Team

Viet Cong officers traveled as scheduled to regional headquarters at Hue and Da Nang on 3 July, but canceled a trip to Pleiku at the last minute.

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Communists were to make short visits to Viet Cong-held territory and bring back additional cadre to staff JMC offices in both regions. The Pleiku trip was planned for this purpose, but the government's bombing of Dak To 2 Airfield on 2 July appears to have discouraged Communist moves in this region, at least for the time being.

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Some movement has been noted in the other four truce regions, but with mixed results. For example, the JMC recently agreed that, in the Phan Thiet region, a fairly large number of Viet Cong delegates would spend a week in a Communist-held area of Binh Thuan Province before bringing out additional cadre for that region. In the delta, however, Communist efforts to get things going in the My Tho region have run up against substantial local footdragging. Neither the government's regional JMC chief nor its 7th Division commander would guarantee security for the Communists, who subsequently left on 28 June after a one-day stay. The US consul general in Can Tho comments that local South Vietnamese officials apparently were caught off guard by the Communists' arrival and were not able to get instructions in time from Saigon.

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Military Activity Lowest in Months

Fighting has ebbed significantly throughout the country, with the exception of some central provinces. The government drive west of Kontum City gained some ground on 4 July, but casualties were heavy and the effort to recapture the two villages has again stalled.

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South Vietnamese officers on the scene have indicated to a US political officer that President Thieu and Military Region 2 Commander General Toan specifically approved plans for the Dak To bombing during their visit to Kontum on 28 June. General Cam, who commands the 23rd Division fighting west of Kontum City, believes the bombing was a "good political decision," and demonstrated the government's willingness to "tough it out." The Communists have warned General Cam, however, that, if there are further bombings, they will shell major military installations around the city heavily.

In the delta, military action has dropped sharply in the once troublesome province of Chuong Thien. The decline, according to the US vice consul in Chuong Thien, results mainly from a Viet Cong pause to digest their considerable gains. The vice consul estimates that the Communists now control 70 percent of the province and 30,000 of the people, with perhaps another 100,000 (out of 245,000) in contested areas leaning toward the Communists. About 12,000 people are believed to have moved from government controlled areas to Viet Cong resettlement areas since the cease-fire in January.

[Redacted area]

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CAMBODIASihanouk's New Line on Talks

[redacted] 25X1
[redacted] Sihanouk
has now qualified his 5 July refusal to open discussions with Washington by saying there would be no talks "while the bombing is going on." [redacted]

[redacted] 25X1
[redacted] said the Soviet ambassador to Peking was among those who welcomed Sihanouk at the airport. Previous Soviet practice was to send low level officials to meet Sihanouk, [redacted]

[redacted] 25X1
[redacted] speculated that the Soviets are warming up to Sihanouk because they believe his prospects for a return to Phnom Penh have improved. [redacted]

The Military Situation

Command problems have delayed a planned government counterattack on Route 4, and Communist insurgents are now in control of a three-mile stretch of this highway west of Phnom Penh. Communist units along Route 3 also returned to the attack yesterday, capturing a highway bridge some ten miles south of the capital. Government units in this sector have made little effort to move out of their defensive positions in the past few days. In the Mekong River corridor, a cargo vessel ran aground above Neak Luong today after Communist gunfire knocked out its steering gear. North of Phnom Penh, truck convoys are moving on Route 5, and the first rice shipments from Battambang City could reach the capital tomorrow. [redacted]

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The Military Situation

There were only a few minor shellings and clashes during the nineteenth week of the cease-fire. Again, most of the action was centered in the Thakhek and Kengkok areas of the central panhandle. In the far south, 40 Pathet Lao troops are reported to have defected to a government team on the Bolovens Plateau. The Lao Air Force flew only four tactical missions during the week.

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